

Train, platform confusion sparked chaos: Authorities

New Delhi stampede death toll rises to 18; preliminary probe revealed that incident occurred after some slipped & fell on others while coming down from a foot overbridge

PTI, NEW DELHI: The death toll in the overnight stampede at the packed New Delhi railway station rose to 18 on Sunday, with authorities saying confusion over almost identical train names after an announcement of the platform number for an arriving Prayagraj-bound special train sparked panic and a sudden rush.

The dead included 11 women, two men, one male teen and four children, according to a list put out by the Delhi police. Three people were also grievously injured and 27 others received simple injuries, the Railway Ministry said in a statement, adding that out of them 11 were given treatment and released from a hospital.

As survivors recalled how people trampled over each other amid cries for help, the Delhi Police said it will analyse the CCTV footage to determine the exact sequence of events before chaos erupted at the station on Saturday night. The station witnessed a surge of passengers waiting to board trains at platform number 14 and 15 for Prayagraj—where the Maha Kumbh is underway.



A man falls amid a huge rush of passengers for boarding an overcrowded train for Prayagraj's Mahakumbh, at the New Delhi railway station, Saturday

A preliminary probe revealed that the stampede occurred after some passengers slipped and fell on others while coming down from a foot overbridge.

The stampede occurred at 9.55 pm when thousands of passengers, mostly Maha Kumbh pilgrims, crowded the station to board trains to Prayagraj.

"There is an unprecedented rush due to Maha Kumbh. Many special trains have been operating for the past several days. Prayagraj Express was about to arrive at platform number 14 and passengers were waiting to board the train," Dilip Kumar, Executive Director, Information and Publicity, Railway Board, said in a statement.

INQUIRY TRIGGERS POLITICAL BLAME GAME

■ The Railway ministry ordered a high level inquiry by a two-member committee into the stampede which also triggered a political blame game.

DEMAND FOR RLY MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

■ The Opposition demanded Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's resignation for alleged mismanagement and accusing the govt of trying to cover up the incident

■ "The committee comprises Pankaj Gangwar, Principal Chief Security Commissioner, and Nar Singh, Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Northern Railway, both Higher Administrative Grade officers," the ministry said

INITIAL PROBE BY POLICE

■ Passengers got confused between "Prayagraj Express" and "Prayagraj Special", and thought they might miss their train, police sources said

■ A narrow stairway with 42 steps leading to a 25-foot-wide foot overbridge at the station turned into a scene of panic and chaos amid unprecedented rush

■ Scattered slippers, torn bags, and abandoned belongings lay strewn across the staircase, the bridge, and platforms 14 and 15

press to come to the platform. Meanwhile, an announcement was made for another train Prayagraj Special to arrive at platform number 12. Before this one, one more special train had already left that platform," Kumar added.

"There was some time left for the Prayagraj Ex-

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Greens: Survival chances of translocated trees bleak

Say govt lacks expertise to transplant or translocate trees; joint inspection to save lone banyan tree at Porvorim tomorrow

Team Herald

PANJIM: Sounding pessimistic on the survival of the age-old banyan tree at Vadakade, Porvorim, environmentalists said that the State just does not have the expertise to transplant or translocate huge trees, since all five transplanted trees are in a precarious state.

A joint inspection to initiate measures to save and protect the banyan tree at Vadakade is scheduled on Tuesday, February 18,

As per the directives of the High Court, the joint inspection will be carried out by the officials of Forest Department and representatives of Doctor Trees, landscape designer and ecological consultant Parag Mody, PWD, road contractor and the petitioner Aaron Victor E Fernandes.

The inspection report will be submitted to the High Court during the next hearing fixed on February 20.

The Khapreshwar Temple Committee and the environmentalists have strongly opposed the move to translocate the huge banyan tree at Porvorim, at the place which is known by the tree name 'Vadakade.'

According to social activist and environmentalist Aver-



UPENDRA NAIK

The age-old trees, including a banyan, which were translocated from Porvorim for the six-lane elevated corridor project, are now struggling to survive and displaying signs of distress. The trees have been replanted outside a company office in Socorro

tino Miranda, the State just does not have the expertise to transplant or translocate huge trees, thus destroying precious heritage trees.

The five trees which were translocated in the fields are almost dead and their survival chances are very bleak, he said.

Similar is the sordid state of banyan tree transplanted from St Inez to Campal grounds; the transplanted tree at Arambol, the transplanted tree at Siolim and the transplanted tree at Calangute. All these transplanted trees have died.

The five trees which are

translocated in low-lying fields at Socorro are two each banyan trees and Alstonias Scholaris and one Pipal tree.

These trees were translocated by a third party Hyderabad-based Doctor Trees, and that immediate action was required in this regard.

Petitioner Aaron Victor E Fernandes has now submitted in the High Court, a report prepared by a landscape designer and ecological consultant Parag Mody, on the status of translocation of five trees at Porvorim.

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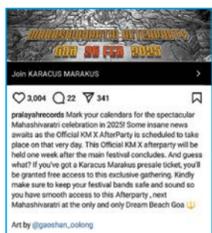
NO RESPECT FOR NATURE: Music fest declares Dream Beach date for after-party

Announcement comes days after O Heraldo report had forced trance festival organisers to quit Dream Beach where endangered Olive Ridley turtles nest

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

ASKAWADA, MANDREM: After O Heraldo campaign forced the organisers to move the Karacus Marakus Festival, away from Dream Beach, a turtle nesting site at Ozrant, Pralahay Records on Sunday announced a Mahashivratri after-party at the site on February 26, leaving green activists fuming.

"Mark your calendars for the spectacular Mahashivratri celebration in 2025! This official KM X after party will be held one week after the main festival concludes. Kindly make sure to keep your festival bands safe and sound so you have smooth access to this afterparty, next Mahashiv-



The social media post released by the organisers

aratri at the only and only Dream Beach Goa," reads the social media post released by the organisers.

"It will be a disaster if they think of having any party on Dream Beach because the law not only protects the turtles,

It will be a disaster if they think of having any party on Dream Beach because the law not only protects the turtles, but it extends to save the turtle habitat. It prevents any sort of activity in the area

— Retired Capt Gerald J Fernandes, recipient of the first Wildlife Conservation Award

but it extends to save the turtle habitat. It prevents any sort of activity in the area," said retired Capt Gerald J Fernandes, recipient of the first Wildlife Conservation Award.

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CELEBRATING FAITH

JOSEPH FERNANDES



The statue of St Thomas being taken out in a procession on the occasion of the Saint's feast at Sao Tome chapel, Panjim, on Sunday

Third US plane with 112 deportees lands in Amritsar

PTI, CHANDIGARH: A US military aircraft carrying 112 illegal Indian immigrants landed at the Amritsar airport late on Sunday evening, the third such plane bringing deportees amid a crackdown by the Donald Trump administration against illegal immigrants.

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The C-17 aircraft landed at the airport at 10:03 pm, sources said.

Of the 112 deportees, 44 are from Haryana, 33 from Gujarat, 31 from Punjab, two from Uttar Pradesh and one each is from Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, they added.

There are 19 women and 14 minors, including two infants, in the fresh batch of deportees, the sources said.

The family members of some of the deportees were present at the airport when the plane landed.

DEPORTED FROM US, TWO GOANS REACH HOME

PANJIM: The two Goans, who were among the 116 Indians deported by the US government, reached their respective homes after arriving at Dabolim Airport on Sunday afternoon following completion of their procedures in Amritsar, Punjab. This was stated by Commissioner for NRI Affairs Narendra Sawaikar while speaking to mediapersons.

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The third batch of deportees landed in Amritsar within 24 hours of another US military aircraft bringing the second such batch.

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MAX. TEMP 32.8 °C
MIN. TEMP 22.6 °C

idharudhar



Can you sublet my shack back to me? I'm a Goan!

Thousands throng Durgabhat, bid tearful farewell to Lavoo

Former Ponda MLA was cremated in local crematorium at Durgabhat, Ponda; legislators cutting across party lines demand thorough investigation into the shocking incident

Team Herald

PONDA: Thousands bid a tearful farewell to former Ponda MLA Lavoo Mamedar, who was cremated in local crematorium at Durgabhat, Ponda on Sunday afternoon.

Earlier in the day, people from all walks of life including ministers and MLAs cutting across party lines and friends made a beeline at Mamedar's residence to pay rich tributes to the departed former legislator.

It may be recalled that the former Ponda MLA died shortly after an altercation with an auto driver, 28-year-old Mujaheed Shakeel Jamadar in Karnataka's Belagavi district on Saturday. Jamadar was later



People from all walks of life gathered outside former MLA Lavoo Mamedar's residence at Durgabhat, Ponda, on Sunday

arrested. An emotional Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar said, "I have lost my childhood friend. Despite political differences, our friendship was intact. Lavoo was one of the leaders

who participated in the agitation demanding 50 per cent bus ticket concession for students, who are reaping the benefits today."

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"Lavoo used to visit Belagavi since his daughter was pursuing higher studies there. On petty issues he was assaulted and the government needs to conduct a thorough probe into his death. If Goans are treated in this manner in Belagavi, we will have to think twice before visiting the city. The Karnataka government must punish the accused autorickshaw driver. Lavoo was an active person, may God grant him eternal rest

— Ravi Naik, Ponda MLA and Agriculture Minister

"Never expected such a thing to happen. Lavoo was my childhood school friend. I am shocked by the incident. The government should conduct a thorough probe and punish the accused

— Deepak Dhavalikar, MGP president

"We are anguished the way Lavoo was attacked, which is a serious offence and this should not repeat in future. A team from the Goa Police should visit Belagavi, investigate the incident and take strict action. Though the accused has been arrested, the case appears to be murder

— Yuri Alemao, Leader of the Opposition

"The way the auto driver attacked Lavoo appears to have led to cardiac arrest. The police should probe thoroughly and give justice to Lavoo and his family. We have lost a very good legislator

— Amit Patkar, Congress State President